

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 02264 091721Z

43

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 776

C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 2264

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CZ

SUBJECT: FOREIGN MINISTRY PROTESTS US SENATE HANDLING OF JOHANES
AFFAIR

1. TOWARD THE END OF LAST WEEK, MFA SIXTH DEPT
DIRECTOR ZANTOVSKY TRIED TO CALL ME IN FOR APPOINTMENT,
I ASKED HIM TO CLARIFY REASON FOR PROPOSED MEETING BUT HE
DECLINED TO DO SO, THEN DROPPED THE IDEA IN FAVOR OF HIS
DEPUTY NOVOTNY'S CALLING IN DCM. NOVOTNY SAW DCM ON AUGUST 9 AND
ISSUED ORAL PROTEST OVER US SENATE SUB-COMMITTEE'S
HANDLING OF ALLEGATIONS BY FORMER CZECHOSLOVAK CITIZEN
THAT AMBASSADOR JOHANES HAS BEEN AND REMAINS A KGB AGENT.

2. NOVOTNY SAID HE HAD BEEN INSTRUCTED BY HIS SUPERIORS
TO ISSUE PROTEST BECAUSE SENATE TREATMENT OF THIS
MATTER: (A) VIOLATES GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT CZECHS
UNDERSTOOD THEY HAD STRUCK DURING ASST SECRETARY
HARTMAN'S OCTOBER 1975 VISIT TO PRAGUE THAT BOTH USG
AND GOC WOULD REFRAIN FROM DELIBERATE ATTACKS,
ESPECIALLY IN THE PRESS, AGAINST ONE ANOTHER;
(B) SENATE JUDICIARY SUB-COMMITTEE TRANSCRIPT CONTAINS "MANY
FACTUAL ERRORS"; AND (C) THE ENTIRE AFFAIR CONTRA-
DICTS "SPIRIT OF HELSINKI."

3. NOVOTNY ADDED PERSONAL NOTE THAT HE REALIZED THIS
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PAGE 02 PRAGUE 02264 091721Z

WAS NOT THE WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, BUT HE

WAS CONCERNED OVER IMPLICATIONS OF THE SENATE'S ACTIONS--ESPECIALLY IN MAKING THE TRANSCRIPT PUBLIC--FOR US-GOC RELATIONS.

4. DCM POINTED OUT THAT, UNLIKE NOVOTNY, HE HAD NO INSTRUCTIONS, BUT WISHED TO REJOIN WITH PERSONAL REMARKS. HE SAID NOVOTNY WAS RIGHT IN STATING THAT DEPARTMENT OF STATE DOES NOT CONTROL THE CONGRESS. UNDER US SEPARATION OF POWERS, US LEGISLATIVE BRANCH ACTS AS IT SEES FIT, AND EXECUTIVE BRANCH CANNOT PREVENT IT FROM DOING SO, EVEN WHEN IT WISHES. AVOIDING ANY EXPRESSION OF REGRET OVER ACTION BY EITHER US SENATE OR THE PRESS, DCM NONETHELESS REAFFIRMED DESIRE OF THE EMBASSY AND THE DEPARTMENT TO HONOR COMMITMENT THAT NEITHER SIDE WOULD, AS A MATTER OF POLICY, DELIBERATELY STIMULATE ABUSIVE PRESS ARTICLES AGAINST THE OTHER. IN THIS REGARD, DCM FELT OBLIGED TO NOTE THAT AUGUST 7 EDITION OF RUDE PRAVO HAD CONTAINED AN UNUSUALLY STRONG ATTACK AGAINST SECRETARY KISSINGER FOR HIS EFFORTS TO BLOCK PARTICIPATION OF COMMUNISTS IN WEST EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS. THE RUDE PRAVO ARTICLE WAS TYPICAL OF THE PERSISTENTLY POLEMICAL LOCAL PRESS TREATMENT THAT US WOULD LIKE TO SEE MITIGATED. REITERATING THAT HIS REMARKS WERE PERSONAL, DCM WENT ON TO EXPRESS HOPE THAT DESPITE CONTINUING DIFFICULTIES BOTH SIDES WOULD ENTER THE FALL OF 1976 WITH BUSINESSLIKE AND REALISTIC EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS.

5. NOVOTNY RECIPROCATED THIS HOPE AND THEN SUGGESTED THAT WE MIGHT SOON TAKE A POSITIVE STEP FORWARD, SINCE MFA EXPECTS TO PROVIDE REPLY WITHIN A FEW DAYS TO US PROPOSAL FOR ELIMINATION OF CLOSED ZONES AND RESTRICTIONS ON PORTS OF ENTRY.

6. COMMENT: NOVOTNY WAS NOTABLY CALM AND CORRECT THROUGHOUT DISCUSSION WITH DCM. HE DID NOT INDICATE WHAT FURTHER ACTION, IF ANY, GOC INTENDS TO TAKE REGARDING ALLEGATIONS IN WASHINGTON THAT AMBASSADOR JOHANES IS A SPY. HE PERSONALLY
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PAGE 03 PRAGUE 02264 091721Z

APPEARED TO WISH THAT THE JOHANES AFFAIR WOULD NOW BEGIN TO FADE AWAY.BYRNE

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